Rye City Planning Commission Minutes

October 28, 2003

1 PRESENT:

- 2 Barbara Cummings, Vice-Chair
- 3 Hugh Greechan (partial)
- 4 Peter Larr
- 5 Patrick McGunagle
- 6 Martha Monserrate

ABSENT:

9 Franklin Chu

ALSO PRESENT:

Christian K. Miller, AICP, City Planner

Vice-Chair Cummings noted the resignation of Chairman Michael W. Klemens, PhD and that she would act as chair for the meeting. Ms. Cummings (speaking for all Commission members) acknowledged Dr. Klemens for his 17 years of dedicated service on City Commissions. She stated that as chairman of the Planning Commission for the last nine years Dr. Klemens strove to achieve consensus in the review of land use applications. He was through in his deliberations and his environmental expertise was an invaluable resource to the Commission and the City. Peter Larr added that Dr. Klemens' departure is an irreplaceable loss to the City. Mr. Larr commented that Dr. Klemens' taught him and others how to incorporate environmental concerns into the review of applications and achieving a balance between property rights and the broader interests of community.

I. HEARINGS

1. Doyle Residence

Vice-Chair Cummings recused herself from the discussion of this matter and left the hearing room. Martha Monserrate acted as chair for this agenda item and read the hearing notice.

Alan Pilch (applicant's consultant) provided an overview of the application noting that it involved an addition to an existing residence located at 100 Mendota Avenue. Mr. Pilch noted that the property is approximately 14,790 square-feet. Mr. Pilch noted that the proposed addition would be within the 100-foot wetland buffer of Blind Brook. The proposed addition would add approximately 195 square-feet of floor area to the house footprint. As mitigation Mr. Pilch proposed to remove the existing lawn area and replace with wetland shrubs at a ratio of 2:1 for the added impervious area to the property.

Mr. Pilch discussed the proposed stormwater management system, which involved the installation of sub-surface units to accommodate the first 1.3 inches of runoff consistent with phase II requirements.

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Mr. Pilch concluded his presentation by noting that the proposed addition would expand the existing kitchen/dining room and expand the master bedroom on the second floor. Mr. Pilch noted that the proposed addition would comply with the floor area ratio requirements of the City's Zoning Code but that relief would be required from the Zoning Board of Appeals for the required rear yard setback.

Gene Colben (Wappanocca Avenue resident) noted that her property is located opposite the applicant's property on the east side of Blind Brook. Ms. Colben questioned the placement of flags on existing trees along Blind Brook. Ms. Colben questioned whether these flags were located on the applicant's property and whether they represented the removal of existing trees. Ms. Colben noted concern that the loss of any trees, particularly those located off the applicant's property. Ms. Colben stated that she is familiar with stringent wetland regulations in other communities and that the City of Rye's regulations should be as equally stringent. Ms. Colben noted that the proposed addition may impact the character of her view along Blind Brook and concern with the impact on her home and outdoor living space.

Mr. Pilch responded that the flags on existing trees do not signify trees to be removed but represented the edge of the wetland area as required by the Rye City Code.

On a motion made by Peter Larr, seconded by Patrick McGunagle and carried by the following vote:

- AYES: Hugh Greechan, Peter Larr, Patrick McGunagle, Martha Monserrate
- 26 NAYS: None
- 27 RECUSED: Barbara Cummings
- 28 ABSENT: Franklin Chu

the Planning Commission took the following action:

ACTION: The Planning Commission closed the public hearing on wetland permit application number WP141.

Vice-Chair Cummings returned to the hearing room and acted as chair for the remainder of the meeting.

2. 205 Grace Church Street

Vice-Chair Cummings read the public notice.

Matt Bavoso (applicant's attorney) noted that he represented Clad Corporation, which is proposing to construct a single-family dwelling on a property located at 205 Grace Church Street. He noted that the subject property is approximately 0.522 acres and that it is located in a R-3 Resident District, which has a minimum lot area of 1/3 acres.

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Mr. Bayoso stated that the application involved the removal of an existing house and garage and the construction of a new residence. A portion of a new residence would be located within the 100-foot wetland buffer. Mr. Bavoso provided an overview of the revisions to the plan in response to the Planning Commission's discussion at its last meeting. Mr. Bavoso noted that a portion of the terrace located in the rear of the house within the 100-foot wetland buffer was removed. In response to concerns raised by the Planning Commission, the site plan was revised to add a retaining wall to reduce the extent of slope disturbance along the southern property boundary adjacent to the offsite wetland. Also as requested by the Planning Commission, Mr. Bavoso stated that a deed restriction would be provided for the gravel driveway to insure that it stays gravel in perpetuity. The result of the revised plan is that it reduces the amount of impervious area within the 100-foot buffer from previously proposed 2,062 square feet to 799 square feet. As mitigation for this increase in impervious area Mr. Bavoso stated that there had been no change in the planned mitigation. Consequently, the amount of wetland plantings is approximately 3.5 to 1 (landscape area to impervious area). He also noted that no structure would be located closer than 80 feet to the existing wetland. Mr. Bavoso added that the existing garage on the property is located approximately 50feet from the existing off-site wetland. To address drainage concerns, Mr. Bavoso stated that two sub-surface drainage units were proposed to capture and treat stormwater runoff.

Michael Davitt (219 Grace Church Street resident) noted that he is located adjacent to the proposed resident. He noted concern with the impact the proposed home would have on his privacy. Mr. Davitt noted that the existing home would approximately double in size from 3,000-square feet to approximately 5,600-square feet. Mr. Davitt suggested that the location of the wetland buffer forced the development of the home towards his property line, which will adversely impact his privacy and neighborhood character. Mr. Davitt suggested that trees should be provided along the northern property line to provide screening or that the previously proposed plan should be pursued. Mr. Davitt noted that the originally proposed plan located the proposed residence further from his home and offered him more privacy and screening opportunities. Mr. Davitt questioned why the proposed residence was not located closer to the existing wetland similarly to the recently approved wetland permit on 195 Grace Church Street, which is currently under construction.

The Planning Commission responded that 195 and 205 Grace Church Street are two separate properties and that the property at 195 Grace Church Street was completely encumbered with either wetland or wetland buffer area. The Commission noted that in the approval of that application that it had no choice but to locate the residence within a regulated area, but that it went to great lengths to avoid placing the proposed residence within wetlands. The Commission noted that with respect to 205 Grace Church Street it is mandated by law to minimize impacts to wetland and wetland buffer areas, which it has done with the subject application. The Commission also noted that the proposed residence would be within all zoning set backs including the side yard setback adjacent

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1 to Mr. Davitt's property. The Commission encouraged provision of additional landscape 2 screening where possible.

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Mr. Bavoso added that he has spoken to Mr. Davitt and that they have agreed to provide some additional evergreen screening along the property line.

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On a motion made by Martha Monserrate, seconded by Peter Larr and carried by the following vote:

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10 AYES: Barbara Cummings, Hugh Greechan, Peter Larr, Patrick McGunagle, 11

Martha Monserrate

- 12 NAYS: None 13 RECUSED: None
- 14 ABSENT: Franklin Chu

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the Planning Commission took the following action:

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- ACTION: The Planning Commission closed the public hearing on wetland permit
 - application number WP137.

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II. ITEMS PENDING ACTION

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1. **Doyle Residence**

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The Planning Commission discussed the comments raised in the Conservation Commission/Advisory Counsel October 10, 2003 letter. The Commission noted that the letter did not object to the proposed project but suggested that more extensive mitigation planting be provided. The Planning Commission noted that the proposed mitigation plan met their requirements and that additional revisions were not necessary.

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The Planning Commission discussed the comments raised in the public hearing regarding the removal of trees. Mr. Pilch again confirmed that no trees are proposed to be removed on the property or off-site along Blind Brook.

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The Planning Commission discussed the 100-year flood elevation relative to the first floor elevation of the existing residence and proposed addition. Mr. Pilch noted that the proposed addition would be the same elevation as the existing first floor. The City Planner added that this first floor elevation would be lower than the 100-year flood elevation but that this was permissible by the City's Flood Plain Management Laws.

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The Planning Commission discussed the overflow for the proposed storm water drainage units. The Commission recommended that the plan be revised to provide stone or some other appropriate measure to reduce stormwater velocity and erosion impacts from the overflow pipe. Mr. Pilch agreed to revise the plans to address the

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1 Commission's concern. The Planning Commission requested that this be added as a 2 condition of wetland permit approval and that the City Planner review the proposed plan 3 modifications before a building permit is issued.

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On a motion made by Martha Monserrate, seconded by Patrick McGunagle and carried by the following vote:

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10 Barbara Cummings, Hugh Greechan, Peter Larr, Patrick McGunagle, AYES:

Martha Monserrate

12 NAYS: None 13 RECUSED: None

14 ABSENT: Franklin Chu

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the Planning Commission took the following action:

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ACTION: The Planning Commission adopted a resolution conditionally approving

wetland permit application number WP141.

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2. **Community Synagogue of Rye**

The City Planner noted that the applicant has started construction, but that the project is not "substantially completed" as required by the expiration provision in the original resolution of approval. The City Planner recommended that the Commission approve the resolution granting a one-year extension of time.

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29 On a motion made by Peter Larr, seconded by Martha Monserrate and carried by the 30 following vote:

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AYES: Barbara Cummings, Hugh Greechan, Peter Larr, Patrick McGunagle,

Martha Monserrate

34 None NAYS: RECUSED: None 35

36 Franklin Chu ABSENT:

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the Planning Commission took the following action:

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ACTION: The Planning Commission adopted a resolution granting a one-year

extension of time to site plan application number SP146A.

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The City Planner noted that the applicant had not fulfilled the conditions of its original subdivision approval and had requested an extension of time. The City Planner recommended that the Commission approve the resolution granting two consecutive 90-day extensions, which is the maximum permitted by New York State Law.

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On a motion made by Peter Larr, seconded by Patrick McGunagle and carried by the following vote:

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9 AYES: Barbara Cummings, Hugh Greechan, Peter Larr, Patrick McGunagle,

10 Martha Monserrate

- 11 NAYS: None12 RECUSED: None
- 13 ABSENT: Franklin Chu

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the Planning Commission took the following action:

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ACTION: The Planning Commission adopted a resolution granting a 180-day

extension of time to subdivision application number SUB280.

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4. 205 Grace Church Street

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The Planning Commission discussed the proposed plan modification. The Commission questioned why a 3-car garage was necessary. Mr. Bavoso responded that the 3-car garage is desired by the applicant and that this improvement is located outside of the regulated area.

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The Planning Commission discussed screening measures that could be provided for the adjacent neighbor. The City Planner noted that such screen is somewhat outside the jurisdiction of the Planning Commission given that the approval involves an application for a wetland permit but encouraged providing additional screening where possible. Mr. Bavoso added that he would be willing to provide additional landscape screening in the form of evergreen trees along the northern property line with the adjacent neighbor.

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The Planning Commission requested that the plan be revised to indicate the height of the proposed wall in the rear yard and that a limit of disturbance line be added to the plan. The Commission recommended that these conditions be incorporated in the resolution of approval.

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On a motion made by Barbara Cummings, seconded by Martha Monserrate and carried by the following vote:

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43 AYES: Barbara Cummings, Hugh Greechan, Peter Larr, Patrick McGunagle,

Martha Monserrate

45 NAYS: None

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1 RECUSED: None

2 ABSENT: Franklin Chu

the Planning Commission took the following action:

ACTION: The Planning Commission adopted a resolution conditionally approving

wetland permit application number WP137.

Hugh Greechan departs from the meeting.

5. Rattner Residence

The Planning Commission acknowledged the receipt of a letter to the Commission from Joan Probber of 5 Guion Road. The Commission noted that this letter was received after the close of the public hearing.

The Planning Commission discussed the comments of the Conservation Commission/Advisory Counsil (CC/AC). The Commission noted that substantial additional information was provided by the applicant but that the CC/AC continued its objection to the application. The Commission noted that it was satisfied with the application and that it addressed the Commission's concerns and meeting the requirements of the Rye City's Wetland Law. The Planning Commission noted that it's would provide findings in its resolution of approval justifying it's variance with the CC/AC's October 24, 2003 letter. The Planning Commission also noted concern with the timeliness of the CC/AC comments and that it is difficult for the Commission to review these comments if not submitted in advance of the meeting.

Jim McGee (CC/AC member) noted that the project would involve disturbances within a 100-foot buffer and noted concerns with the impact with the proposed project on the intertidal zone. The Planning Commission responded that the applicant is fully aware that the application requires a wetland permit approval from both City of Rye and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). Jonathan Kraut (applicant's attorney) confirmed that all activities would occur above the mean high water line and therefore outside of regulated tidal wetland areas. Mr. Kraut added that all wetland plantings would also be located above the mean high water mark.

The Planning Commission discussed the CC/AC comments relative to the potential inconsistencies with the plans presented to the NYSDEC and those presented to the City for approval. Mr. Kraut confirmed that both plans submitted to NYSDEC and the City are identical. The Commission noted that it would make this a condition of approval.

On a motion made by Peter Larr, seconded by Martha Monserrate and carried by the following vote:

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1 AYES: Barbara Cummings, Peter Larr, Patrick McGunagle, Martha Monserrate

2 NAYS: None 3 RECUSED: None

ABSENT: Franklin Chu, Hugh Greechan

the Planning Commission took the following action:

ACTION: The Planning Commission adopted a resolution conditionally approving wetland permit application number WP133.

6. Beechwind ¹

The City Planner provided a procedural overview of the application. The City Planner noted that the Zoning Board of Appeals granted use, area in floodplan management variances in connection with the applicant's proposal to construct four single-family homes on separate subdivided lots. The City Planner noted that the Zoning Board conducted a coordinated review under SEQRA requesting whether the Planning Commission would consent to the Zoning Board serving as lead agency for the environmental review of the application. The Planning Commission did not consent to the Zoning Board's desire to be lead agency. The City Planner explained that the Planning Commission must therefore make its own determination of significance under SEQRA. The City Planner suggested that it did not appear necessary to conduct an additional coordinated review and since the proposed action is an Unlisted action.

Albert Pirro (applicant) provided an overview of the application and some of the changes that have occurred since the applicant last appeared before the Planning Commission. Mr. Pirro stated that he had been in contact with the Rye Boat Basin Commission to determine whether they would be receptive to receiving docks generally located in front of the Shongut property. Mr. Pirro stated that the Boat Basin Commission was not receptive to the docks since it required the construction of a new dock to connect the boat basins' existing dock with the docks in front of the Shongut property. This connection would go in front of the adjacent Rye Fish and Game Club. Mr. Pirro stated that the proposed configuration across the adjacent property owned by the Rye Fish and Game Club presented undesirable complications. Mr. Pirro stated that the Boat Basin Commission was not receptive to the idea of such a connection.

Mr. Pirro discussed his proposed plan noting that he intends to keep the Gedney store. Mr. Pirro noted that an access way would be provided along the northern boundary of the Shongut property which would extend from Milton Road to the water. The existing Shongut docks would be operated as a corporation called "Rye Boat Club." Mr. Pirro stated that this boat club would have 16 members and that 4 of its members are going to own one each of the 4 homes which will have their own docks at the adjacent

¹ The applicant prepared a transcript of this discussion, which is available for public inspection, in the application file.

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Brailsford property. Mr. Pirro stated that the corporation would be obligated to maintain the docks. The docks in front of the Shongut property would provide for 12 boat owners and these 12 boat slips would be leased to the public on a first-come-first-serve basis. The 12 boat slips would not have boat storage rights in the winter months on the property.

The Planning Commission discussed with the applicant his discussions with the Boat Basin regarding the transfer of the 12 boat slips to the City of Rye. Mr. Pirro stated that he would continue to maintain his offer to give the slips to the City of Rye but stated that the opposition of the Fish and Game Club to have connecting dock in front of their property presented complications that made the Boat Basin Commission less interested in the proposal. The Planning Commission stated that if it were deemed to be in the interest of Rye residents that it might help facilitate a discussion with the Boat Basin Commission. The Commission noted that the City may be amenable to accepting the slips even a connection was not provided. Mr. Pirro stated that he would continue to make his offer to the City.

Rex Gedney (applicant's architect) provided an overview of the plan including the existing site conditions. Mr. Gedney noted the existing and proposed impervious surfaces on the property. Mr. Gedney noted that the proposal involves the construction of 4 single-family residences, all of which would be approximately 4,000 square feet in area. The Gedney store would be used as an accessory structure to the primary residence on proposed Lot 2.

Mr. Gedney noted revisions in the previously proposed lot line configurations to establish a view corridor between Lots 2 and 3. The changes in lot lines also provided for a new public access right-of-way along the northern property boundary.

Craig Studer (applicant's landscape architect) provided an overview of the proposed landscape plan noting the treatment of plant material within the 40-foot view corridor. Mr. Studer also provided an overview of the cross-sections of the proposed plantings and architecture. Mr. Studer noted how the configuration of the proposed homes had been adjusted on the property. Mr. Studer discussed the plant material that would be permitted within the proposed view corridor noting that the proposed easement would permit low-lying plants in a portion of the easement area ranging in height from 1 to 3 feet. Mr. Studer stated that street trees would be provided but that they would not interfere with the use of the water and would soften the architecture along Milton Road.

Tim Allen (applicant's engineer) discussed the proposed site plan noting the proposed drainage system. Mr. Allen discussed the reduction in impervious area on the property in the proposed condition noting that the existing property has approximately 85% of impervious area. Mr. Allen noted the location of the proposed catch basins and the discharge of the storm water into the adjacent Milton Harbor.

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Mr. Studer discussed the proposed driveway curb cuts. Mr. Studer understood the Planning Commissions' request to limit the number of driveway curb cuts on Milton Road to three. Mr. Studer stated that the applicant considered a number of alternatives. These alternative drawings were shown to the Planning Commission. Mr. Studer noted that various alternatives to create 3 rather than 4 curb cuts compromised either site design, the Gedney store or encroachments into the view corridor. Mr. Studer also stated that it was important that the driveway be configured such that they provide for reasonable turn-around areas so a vehicle does not have to back directly out onto Milton Road. The Planning Commission discussed various alternative designs to achieve 3 rather than 4 curb cuts on Milton Road. The Commission agreed that the applicant should reconsider its design to not have any encroachment of driveway within the designated view corridor consistent with the Zoning Board decision. The Commission noted that it was concerned regarding vehicles backing out onto Milton Road and that it would reconsider its previous request to limit the property to 3 curb cuts.

The Planning Commission discussed the proposed public access and provision for boat slips. The Commission noted its preference to make the boat slips available to the public and felt that that could best be facilitated if the boat slips were owned and managed by the City of Rye Boat Basin. The Commission noted that it respected the concerns of the Boat Basin Commission and stated that a member of the Commission would discuss with the Boat Basin Commission under what circumstances it might be prepared to accept the proposed boat slips. The Commission noted that members of the Planning Commission would try to communicate to the Boat Basin Commission prior to its next meeting.

The Planning Commission discussed the need for off-street parking for the 12 boat slips. The Commission discussed whether it would be appropriate to have parking spaces set aside on the applicant's property to serve these boat slips or whether parking at the nearby boat basin would be acceptable. The Commission noted that the need for parking demand would likely be reduced if the boat slips were part of the City Boat Basin. The Commission agreed that the issue regarding parking would also be discussed with the Boat Basin Commission. The Commission also suggested that Peter Fox be contacted to get a better sense of the availability of parking at the boat basin.

The Planning Commission discussed the proposed location of the gate for the public access. The Commission noted that it wanted the public to have the right of access to the access way and to the platform along the water. The gate would be separating this public area from the dock slips. The Commission noted that the Zoning Board's decision located the gate at Milton Road thereby limiting access to the general public. The Commission noted that if the boat slips could be connected to the existing slips owned by the Boat Basin that there would be somewhat less of a need for public access. The Commission agreed to consider the gate and public access after members of the Commission discussed the proposed boat slip configurations with the Boat Basin Commission.

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The Planning Commission discussed the preservation of the Gedney store. The Commission suggested that specific deed restrictions be prepared to indicate the long-term commitment to preserve the store in its historic character. Mr. Gedney provided some renderings and discussed its restoration/rehabilitation proposal.

The Planning Commission noted that it was not prepared to set a public hearing until additional information was submitted and that some of the issues regarding the 12 boat slips and their possible offering to the Boat Basin are resolved. The Commission also noted that it wanted to see specific easement language restricting the view corridor and deed restrictions for the Gedney store. The Commission noted specifically that fences should not be permitted within the easement areas. The Commission also suggested that the applicant consider additional restrictions to prevent fences along common property lines that would block views of neighbors but that its primary concern was having specific language that would prevent the public's view of the water being blocked within the view corridor. Mr. Pirro stated that he would provide that information but noted that one exception would be the need for a fence along the top of the bulkhead to prevent people from falling into the water. The Commission agreed with that exception.

The Planning Commission discussed measures to protect the wetland during and after construction. The Commission requested that more information be provided regarding erosion control during construction. The Commission also requested that more information be presented regarding hazardous materials on the site. The Commission noted that the applicant's mitigation plan and mitigation plantings should be consistent with its prior practice with other similar applications.

7. Tomczyk Residence

The City Planner noted that the subject application requires substantial modifications to comply with the recently adopted Zoning Code amendments. The City Planner noted that the existing grade was proposed to be raised by more that 3-feet, which is not permitted. The City Planner suggested, however, that preliminary comments from the Planning Commission be provided regarding the impact of the proposed residence on Paul Jaehnig (applicant's landscape architect) provided an the on-site wetland. overview of the application noting that it involved the removal of an existing residence and the construction of a new residence within a 100-foot wetland buffer. Mr. Jaehnig noted that there would be an approximately 800-square foot reduction of impervious area within the wetland buffer. Mr. Jaehnig stated that the proposed residence would be located within the 100-foot buffer and that approximately 2,900-square feet of mitigation area is proposed. The Planning Commission discussed the existing condition of the property noting that it has been subject to recent vandalism and that based on a property inspection by one Commission member that a hose was left on in the front yard. Mr. Tomczyk responded that he will investigate those concerns.

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The Planning Commission noted the encroachment of an existing driveway on the property that serves as access for an adjacent property located to the rear. The City Planner noted that he would investigate the prior subdivision approval for this property to determine whether a driveway easement exists or if one was required as part of prior subdivision approval.

The Planning Commission noted that it would prefer that the plan be revised to shift more of the residence outside of the wetland buffer. The Planning Commission noted that this plan revision could be achieved without the need for any variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Planning Commission added that where such opportunities exist it is compelled by the Rye City Wetlands Law to preserve wetland buffer areas and minimize encroachments.

The Commission discussed drainage problems in the front yard that resulted in routine flooding of Forest Avenue. The Commission questioned whether there were any wetland areas located in the front yard and what measures could be taken to alleviate this condition. Mr. Jaehnig responded that he conducted soil surveys in the front yard and noted no wetland soils. Mr. Jaehnig added that the applicant will consider additional drainage measures to address this preexisting drainage condition. The Planning Commission requested that the City Engineer review the proposed drainage plans to both insure that the proposed project will not aggravate this existing condition and, where possible, potentially eliminate this localized flooding concern.

The Planning Commission noted the loss of an existing stand of mature trees. The Commission requested that the revised site plan include a planting plan to mitigate for the loss of the trees.

8. Minutes

The Commission reviewed and approved minutes of its September 23 and October 14, 2003 meetings.